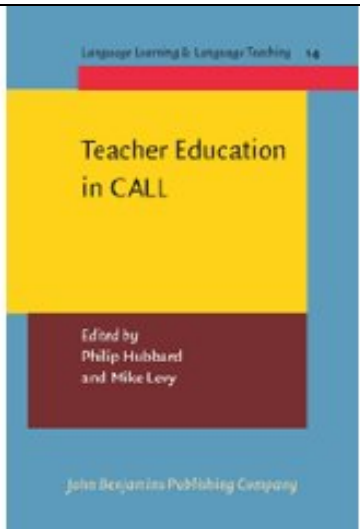


REVIEW OF *TEACHER EDUCATION IN CALL*

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| <p><i>Teacher Education in CALL</i></p> <p>Philip Hubbard & Mike Levy (Eds.)</p> <p>2006 ISBN 90-272-1968-0 US \$54.00 (paperback) XI, 354 pp</p> <p>John Benjamins Publishing Co. Philadelphia, PA, USA</p> |  |
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The use of technology has become increasingly important in language teaching and learning. The successful use of technology, however, requires that language teachers have the necessary technical competence and pedagogical knowledge. The volume *Teacher Education in CALL*, edited by Philip Hubbard and Mike Levy, appears at a critical time when the issue of how to prepare current and future language teachers for effective use of technology in their profession is a serious and growing concern. As the editors point out in the introduction to the volume, “both pre-service and in-service language teachers will find themselves at a disadvantage if they are not adequately proficient in computer-assisted language learning” (p. ix). Although the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has produced a set of guidelines to increase technological competence among teachers (ISTE, 2000), CALL teacher education presents a number of unique challenges and opportunities that have not yet been fully explored. For example, several chapters in the volume report that many teachers do not have access to solid professional development or lack institutional support, and that it is often unclear whether CALL training will lead to subsequent changes in teaching practice. It is also unclear what types of teacher education work best in which situations, and how teachers perceive and respond to different professional development opportunities that involve learning about and using technology.

Teacher Education in CALL opens a much-needed discussion of these concerns. The volume brings together twenty chapters that link the theory of CALL teacher education with available options in pre-service, in-service, and informal professional development. Each chapter begins with a short preface written by the editors that summarizes how the chapter is connected to the rest of the volume. The volume captures the complexities involved in training teachers in CALL, such as the frequent lack of human and technological resources and the lack of support at some institutions. Classroom teachers, CALL professionals, teacher trainers, and program administrators will benefit from reading the examples and reflective stories of other teachers and teacher educators working in diverse contexts and communities. Chapters in the volume are divided into five sections: Foundations of CALL, CALL Degree Programs, CALL Pre-Service Courses, CALL In-Service Projects and Workshops, and Alternatives to Formal CALL Training. Three central themes emerge from these chapters: existing problems and complexities in CALL teacher education, current practice in diverse contexts, and the impact of technology training on teachers’ roles and identities.

Theme 1: Existing Problems and Complexities in CALL Teacher Education

The first theme addresses the realities and complexities of teacher education and technology, topics discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 12. For example, in Chapter 2, Greg Kessler provides results for a survey of 240 graduates of North American TESOL master's degree programs after asking them how satisfied they were with the technology training they had received in their degree programs. As the author points out, "it seemed that formal language teacher education programs have largely neglected to equip their graduates with the related knowledge and skills they need to enter today's technologically advanced language classroom" (p.23), and many teachers have been engaged in consulting alternative resources, such as conference workshops, websites, colleagues, and personal readings to compensate for this deficit. Kessler thus makes a number of recommendations, such as involving both a CALL specialist in teacher education programs and stakeholders (i.e., "all teacher preparation faculty," p. 34), providing incentives to language teachers (such as "release time, financial compensation and recognition," p.35), and keeping technological use relevant to teaching. It should be noted that keeping technological use relevant or "real" (p. 101) is key to project and situated learning. Several other chapters, such as in chapter 6 written by Robert Debski), in this volume also address this point.

In Chapter 3, Kathryn Murphy-Judy and Bonnie Youngs describe the history and development of technology standards for CALL in the United States and their implementation in the United States, Colombia, and the European Union. In Colombia, national priority is given to promote multi-lingual competence and information technology. Similarly, the Council of Europe has articulated its *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, whose goal is "a plurilingual and intercultural adept European Union" (Murphy-Judy & Youngs, 2006, p. 56) with technology competence as an important component of the framework. The US seems to lack any similar objective on a national level, and so the authors conclude that, although the US may be a global forerunner in developing and applying new technology, it lags other countries in "articulating a national policy on the need and support of foreign language education" (p. 58).

Of equal importance are the conflicts teachers encounter in working with situational constraints. For example, chapter 12 by Angela Rickard, Francoise Blin, and Chrsiting Appel offers a report on a large-scale initiative of in-service training for technology education in the Republic of Ireland. Their pilot program consisted of two phases. In the initial Training for Trainers phase (Phase 1), a group of teachers were selected from a range of educational contexts (e.g., rural and urban; primary, secondary and further education schools) across Ireland. They attended five one-day CALL training sessions, which cover, for example, how to "use word-processing and presentation software, source web-based materials, create web-based exercises and activities, use email or chat to set up collaborative projects, and utilize online dictionaries and corpora" (Rickard, Blin, & Appel, 2006, p. 207). In Phase 2, the teacher trainees of Phase 1 became trainers and run CALL courses for their colleagues in local contexts. The courses developed by the Phase 1 participants largely mirrored the themes covered in Phase 1 and were also evaluated by their own trainees.

However, as the authors indicate, there are a number of practical issues that need to be taken into consideration before implementing any training program, such as the extensive preparation time, adequate hardware and software support, and trainers' expertise. This two-phase training program should be of interest to government or professional entities attempting CALL education on a large scale because the pilot program "[brought] together actors from every sector of the Irish education system, from national agencies to representatives of schools, further education colleges and universities" (p. 215). As such, it formed the basis for a network of professionals working together toward the development of CALL teacher education.

Theme 2: Current Practices in Teacher Development with CALL

The second theme unifying the chapters in *Teacher Education in CALL* is the focus on current practice and the contexts characterizing teacher development in the use of CALL. These chapters explore a variety of approaches, including project learning, situated learning, online courses, collaborative development, computer-mediated communication, collaborative online learning, integration of CALL education throughout degree programs, communities of practice in CALL education, expert-novice mentoring, and learner autonomy. All these approaches can be adapted and used in diverse contexts, such as pre-service, in-service, and informal professional development, depending on the availability of human and technological resources and institutional support. These approaches represent recent developments in pedagogical theories, such as the theory of project-based teaching (Beckett & Millers, 2006).

Project-based learning

Project-based learning has made its way into the second and foreign language classroom over the past two decades (Beckett & Millers, 2006). This approach involves the use of project work or project-driven curricula and is often characterized by experiential learning, a focus on problem-solving, a tangible end product, and reflection upon both product and process by the learners. In Chapter 6, Robert Debski regards project learning as a pillar in constructivist approaches and introduces the rationale and implementation of a CALL course project at the University of Melbourne. The project aimed at developing a website that prepares students from Japan for their cultural experience in Australia. The author makes it clear that project-based learning is useful in evoking learners' awareness of audience, promoting the use of authentic materials, fostering learners' collaboration, and helping to practice a number of computer skills, such as graphic and web design.

Successful examples of employing projects in CALL teacher education can also be found in other chapters within the volume; for instance, Chin-Chi Chao (Chapter 13) describes the use of [WebQuests](#) as a collaborative project in CALL education in Taiwan.

Situated learning

In Chapter 10, Joy Egbert talks about situated contexts in CALL teacher education. Situated learning refers to learning through participation in instructional experiences in actual classrooms. However, when field experience in classrooms is not available, distance learning can be an effective alternative. The author introduces various real-world cases related to language teaching. For example, in one case, a teacher was trying to use technology to help migrant students with their pronunciation by encouraging them to use audio emails. Other teachers were asked to analyze the case to determine if the teacher had used an appropriate pedagogical approach to teaching pronunciation and then propose solutions to any problems they observed. Situated learning seems especially useful in preparing pre-service teachers to apply what they have learned to real-life cases.

Online courses and computer-mediated communication

Christine Bauer-Ramazani's chapter 11 presents the design and application of asynchronous and synchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) in online CALL courses. According to the author, CMC provides an effective community for students' interaction, feedback exchange, and collaboration. Bauer-Ramazani makes it clear that in addition to the content to be taught, the "human factor" (p. 191) is also critical in online CALL course design. For example, the design of a user-friendly "virtual café" (p. 191) allows course participants to discuss issues not directly related to the course.

Similarly, Christopher Jones and Bonnie Youngs (Chapter 16) stress the importance of an online component and the application of CMC in a hybrid CALL training course at Carnegie Mellon University. The authors consider such courses especially useful for in-service teacher training because they are

flexible and affordable compared to regular degree programs, and because teachers have full control of their own CALL learning processes, depending on time available.

Collaborative development

A collaborative Internet project for students at Yakutsk State University, Siberia, is introduced by Larissa Olesova and Christine Meloni in Chapter 14. As the authors note, their case presents a context in which political, social, economic, and cultural situations pose challenges to CALL education, given that Yakutsk is located in a particularly remote area of Russia. In the collaborative Internet project described in the chapter, students were asked to find articles or websites on collaborative Internet projects, work with other students to evaluate these projects, and design their own collaborative projects which would make use of email, the web, *Nicenet* (a discussion board), and *Tapped-In* (an online chatting platform). Collaborative development was found to be useful as it promoted understanding among teachers and helped bridge gaps between participants.

Integration of CALL education throughout degree programs

Martine Peters (Chapter 9) discusses the development of computer competencies for pre-service language teachers in Quebec, Canada, and concludes with survey results indicating that a single course on technology in a teacher education program is not sufficient in preparing technologically competent teachers. While such a course produced quick results, it did not guarantee the development of technological competence over time. Thus, CALL courses should be integrated throughout a teacher education program.

Volker Hegelheimer addresses this same concern in Chapter 7 by describing the integration of technology components into students' coursework throughout the curriculum of the MA TESL program at Iowa State University. For example, the concept of learner corpora and computer analysis of texts is introduced when students are taking courses in *English Grammar* and *Second Language Acquisition*. Also, data analysis is integrated into the courses *Teaching Methods* and *Language Testing*. The author quotes Chapelle's (2003) remark that "the way that students will learn to do applied linguistics with technology is by learning applied linguistics through technology" (p. 31). Hegelheimer's approach is refreshing and engaging in that he sees computer competency not merely as a single component of the MA program, but as woven into every aspect of the learning process.

Communities of Practice in CALL education and learner autonomy

In addition to the approaches mentioned above, the concepts of self-learning and group learning are also proposed in the volume. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe Communities of Practice (CoPs) as occurring in a variety of settings where social groups naturally form to solve problems, share knowledge, mentor or assist apprentices, and collaborate to practice the skills of a domain. Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, in Chapter 18, concludes that the idea of promoting virtual communities (one type of CoP) among language teachers is promising because it allows teachers to interact with like-minded peers, adding the advantage of building their experience and confidence in using CMC.

Marinna Kolaitis and her colleagues also suggest that CALL teacher education is more likely to be successful if it is teacher-initiated (Chapter 19). Both pre- and in-service teachers, when participating in CALL training courses as learners, will benefit if they draw on support networks such as CMC and CoPs and develop learner autonomy. Learner autonomy is especially important for teachers' professional development in the long run after a training course is complete.

Theme 3: The Impact of Technology Education on Teacher Roles

The impact of technology and technology education on teachers' roles and identities serves as the final theme of the volume. Several chapters discuss how teachers experience changes in terms of their perceptions of their roles, and how teacher educators can prepare teachers for these changes. William

Wong and Phil Benson (Chapter 15) report on an 18-month case study in which they compare the performances of two experienced EFL teachers in Hong Kong after these teachers completed an in-service CALL training course. The authors conclude that individual differences, such as the awareness of teachers' roles and identities, lead to differences in long-term outcomes; specifically, the teacher who was more comfortable with a student-centered and communicative approach to language teaching seemed to be the most successful in integrating technology into the class.

Another interesting point is made about teachers as producers rather than consumers of knowledge (Freeman, 1998). Hubbard and Levy argue that teachers have "the potential to be much more than consumers, and we want them to be regarded as having the capacity for research and development in CALL and performing in functional roles beyond practitioners" (p.12). In fact, a very similar view is put forth by Kessler in Chapter Two: "Teachers and developers of teacher training programs should approach development not in terms of what a computer can do, but in terms of what a human can do" (p.26).

As far as teachers' roles and identities are concerned, Chapter 5 by Diane Slaouti and Gary Motteram exemplifies the reconstructive processes of how teachers changed their roles in the classroom. The study was conducted at Manchester University in the UK. The key component in reconstructive processes, as indicated by the authors, is to raise teachers' awareness of the changing role of teachers with technology integration into the classroom. In their study, teachers were asked to reflect on their teaching practices and report how their perceived roles in the language classroom changed over a period of time. In this way, the authors expect to trace the cognitive and psychological development of teachers as technology is integrated into daily classroom activity. As Biggs (1999) pointed out, learning is a process that allows people to explore their understanding of the knowledge they have gained and to develop a layer of knowledge that allows for transformation of learning-at-a-time into learning-over-time. Once again, readers are reminded of the potential of language teachers to be much more than technology consumers; rather, teachers participate actively in the transformation of learning, weaving their background, experiences, goals, and expectations into the process.

Final Thoughts

This volume consists of twenty chapters which are further divided into five sections, and the bulk deals with the first two central themes, that is, the existing problems and complexities in CALL teacher education and current practice in diverse contexts. Questions such as "What courses are appropriate for CALL training programs?" and "Is there a best practice for CALL teacher training?" have been puzzles for CALL teacher educators for a long time. Zhao and Tella (2002) also pointed out that the issue of what organizational arrangements promote technology use by teachers needs to be addressed. This volume is the first attempt to address these questions. It provides practical information by reporting the authors' experiences in a wide range of educational environments and contexts. Most chapters are written as personal or institutional stories. In addition, the complexities that have been or still need to be addressed in teacher education in CALL, such as the lack of human and technological resources and institutional support, are also given considerable discussion. It introduces a variety of CALL training frameworks (e.g., integration of CALL across the language teacher curriculum, project learning, situated learning, and online courses) that will fit the needs of a particular institutional environment and is therefore a useful handbook for language teachers, teacher educators, and program administrators.

Particularly interesting about this volume is the discussion of the third theme: cognitive and psychological development of teachers as technology is integrated into the language classroom. Zhao and Tella (2002) note that the relationship between teachers and technology has been a long-standing issue that is yet to be resolved. Some argue that technology will replace teachers, while others contend that there is no need for technology. Hubbard and Levy's volume indicates that the truth lies somewhere in between. The volume's discussion of the changing roles, self-perception, and motivation of language teachers will

contribute to defining the different roles that technology and teachers should play in the language classroom.

However, the volume is lacking any type of comparison study of other critical issues such as the differences and similarities between different training modes (e.g., on-line versus face-to-face teaching). For instance, one possible question in this line of research could be “Since online discussions are completely text-based, are we expecting more critical thinking from discussions that take place in the forums than we do from verbal classroom discussions in residential classrooms?” (Pawan, Paulus, Yalcin, & Chang, 2003) In a nutshell, *Teacher Education in CALL* addresses existing problems and complexities in CALL teacher education, current practice in diverse contexts, and the impact of technology training on teachers’ roles and identities. The intertwining of policies, research, theoretical frameworks, and practical experiences makes this edited volume a valuable reference. It presents the status quo of CALL teacher education and informs future research.

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